

comprising an instruction list containing at least one data element identifier;

a secondary port configured to receive optional secondary sort criteria;

an output port configured to send an adapted list of data element identifiers to the information sorting mechanism; and

a filter configured to:

- receive the instruction list from the instruction port,
- receive the secondary sort criteria from the secondary port,
- create the adapted list by merging the instruction list with relevant portions of the secondary sort criteria which may include the entire secondary sort criteria, and
- send the adapted list to the output port;

whereby the system adapts secondary sort criteria to user-specified sort criteria, giving a user control over the primary sort criteria while retaining the benefit of the secondary sort criteria.

30. The system recited in claim 29 wherein:

the secondary sort criteria includes a default list having at least one data element identifier; and

the filter assembles the adapted list comprising each data element identifier from the instruction list followed by each data element identifiers from the default list that is not in the instruction list.

31. The system recited in claim 29 wherein:

the secondary sort criteria includes at least one explicit data element identifier with associated implied criteria; each implied criteria comprising at least one implied data

element identifier; and

the filter assembles the adapted list by starting with an empty adapted list, iterating through the instruction list, and, for each item in the instruction list adding, without regard to order, one or both of the item itself and any implied data element identifiers associated with the item.

32. The system recited in claim 31 wherein the filter first adds the implied data element identifiers and then adds the item.

33. The system recited in claim 32 wherein the implied data includes at least one of the following:

City IMPLIES Area Code;

City IMPLIES State;

City IMPLIES Province;

City IMPLIES Country, State;

City IMPLIES Country, Province;

State IMPLIES Country;

Company Name IMPLIES IsRecruitingAgency; and

Job Title IMPLIES IsContractPosition.

34. The system recited in claim 31 wherein the filter first adds the item and then adds the implied data element identifiers.

35. The system recited in claim 34 wherein the explicit data element identifier and associated implied criteria includes at least one of the following:

Area Code IMPLIES City;

State IMPLIES City;

Province IMPLIES City;

Country IMPLIES State; and

Country IMPLIES State, City.

36. The system recited in claim 31 wherein the filter adds the implied data element identifiers and does not add the item.

37. The system recited in claim 36 wherein the explicit data element identifier and associated implied criteria includes at least one of the following:

City IMPLIES AreaCode-City;

City IMPLIES State-City;

City IMPLIES Province-City;

City IMPLIES Country-State-City; and

City IMPLIES Country-Province-City.

38. The system recited in claim 31 wherein the filter does not add a data element identifier to the adapted list if the adapted list already contains the data element identifier.

39. The system recited in claim 31 wherein the filter adds every implied data element identifier that is implied by any implied data element identifier.

40. The system recited in claim 29 wherein:

the secondary sort criteria includes

a default list having at least one data element identifier; and

at least one explicit data element identifier with associated implied criteria; each implied criteria containing at least one implied data element identifier; and

the filter assembles the adapted list by starting with an empty adapted list and:

iterating through the instruction list, and, for each item in the instruction list adding to the adapted list, without regard to order, one or both of the item itself and any implied data element identifiers associated with the item; and

appending to the adapted list each data element identifier from the default list that is not in the adapted list.

41. The system recited in claim 29, further comprising a control port configured to receive an optional command; and wherein the filter reads the command from the control port, and, if the command indicates that the secondary sort criteria should not be used, the filter creates an adapted list identical to the instruction list.

42. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the information sorting mechanism is comprised of a database, a database management system, a search engine supporting full-text search and sorting by data elements within the text, or a sorting library or code module.

43. The system recited in claim 29 wherein each data element is comprised of a database field, tagged data including HTML, XML, or SGML, meta data, or a document.

44. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the secondary port is comprised of static data stored in a storage means.

45. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the secondary port is configured to interact with code; and wherein the filter is configured to invoke the code in a procedural, object-oriented or other programmatic fashion.

46. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the instruction port is coupled to an HTTP Web server, or coupled to a computer-readable media, or configured to communicate via a standard electronic messaging protocol.

47. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the output port is configured to interact with code; and wherein the filter is configured to invoke the information sorting mechanism in a procedural, object-oriented or other programmatic fashion.

48. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the system is implemented as a script embedded in, or linked to, a document employing a markup language including HTML, XML or SGML.

49. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the system is implemented as a desktop, client-server, or n-tier application.

50. The system recited in claim 29 wherein the filter is further configured to translate the adaptive list to the syntax or the format of the target information sorting mechanism.

51. The system recited in claim 29 wherein each data element is part of a data object, the data object having at least one data unit of employment information.

52. A sort system comprising:

a data producer,

a data consumer,

an instruction port configured to receive optional primary sort criteria, the primary sort criteria comprising every sort criteria specified by a user, the primary sort criteria

- comprising an instruction list containing at least one data element identifier;
- a secondary port configured to receive optional secondary sort criteria;
- an information sorting mechanism configured to accept an adapted list of data element identifiers; and
- a filter configured to:
  - receive the instruction list from the instruction port,
  - receive the secondary sort criteria from the secondary port,
  - create the adapted list by merging the instruction list with relevant portions of the secondary sort criteria which may include the entire secondary sort criteria, and
  - send the adapted list to the information sorting mechanism;
- a controller configured to receive the data from the data producer, invoke the information sorting mechanism to sort the data according to the adapted list, and forward the sorted data to the data consumer.

53. A search system comprising:

- a data source,
- a search port configured to receive search criteria;
- an instruction port configured to receive optional primary sort criteria, the primary sort criteria comprising every sort criteria specified by a user, the primary sort criteria comprising an instruction list containing at least one data element identifier;
- a secondary port configured to receive optional secondary sort criteria;

an information sorting mechanism configured to accept an adapted list of data element identifiers; and

an information location mechanism configured to locate data objects in the data source that match the received search criteria;

an information formatting mechanism configured to format data;

a filter configured to:

receive the instruction list from the instruction port,

receive the secondary sort criteria from the secondary port,

create the adapted list by merging the instruction list with relevant portions of the secondary sort criteria which may include the entire secondary sort criteria, and

send the adapted list to the information sorting mechanism;

a controller configured to receive the data objects from the information location mechanism, invoke the information sorting mechanism to sort the data according to the adapted list, and forward the sorted data to a client process and visual display unit to display the formatted data objects.

54. The system recited in claim 53 wherein the data formatting employs a markup language including HTML, XML or SGML.

55. The search system recited in claim 53 wherein the contents of at least one data element of at least one data object contains employment information.